

**Subject:** Ministry of Social Development | Your Official Information Act request dated 5 September 2025  
**Date:** Wednesday, 17 September 2025 at 12:33:28 PM New Zealand Standard Time  
**From:** OIA\_Requests (MSD)  
**To:** McGuinness Institute OIAs  
**CC:** Wendy McGuinness, [REDACTED]  
**Attachments:** 20250905 OIA 2025-15 MSD.pdf

IN-CONFIDENCE

Tēnā koe Wendy McGuinness

On 5 September 2025, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

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### **Cabinet material**

1. Can you provide a copy of the cabinet paper titled 'COVID-19 financial support, Paper A: Business Continuity Package: Targeted wage subsidy scheme' that is referred to on p.1 of *COVID-19 financial support, Paper A: Business Continuity Package: Targeted wage subsidy scheme* (dated 15 March 2020)?
2. Can you confirm that the above-named cabinet paper was the first Cabinet paper that set out the initial design of what is now known as the wage subsidy scheme?
3. If earlier Cabinet papers exist that mentions (and possibly describes) the potential wage subsidy for the pandemic, can you provide copies of those papers?

### **Scheme design**

4. Who was involved in the initial development of the wage subsidy scheme prior to the *COVID-19 financial support, Paper A: Business Continuity Package: Targeted wage subsidy scheme* cabinet paper on 15 March 2020?
  - a. What agencies/parties were involved in this early development of the subsidy between 1 February 2020 and 31 March 2020 (e.g. Treasury, MSD, MBIE, and IRD)?
  - b. Can you provide minutes and papers relating to any meetings between any of the parties mentioned directly above over the time period 1 February 2020 to 31 March 2020?
  - c. Can you provide any papers that explored the different job retention options (e.g. the pros and cons)?
5. When was ODESC and the National Crisis Management Centre briefed on the Wage Subsidy Scheme? Please provide a date and any papers MSD provided?
6. Can you provide copies of all cabinet material that relate to all five iterations of the Wage Subsidy Scheme in the discussion paper: *Discussion Paper 2025/02 – How to Tell the*

*Difference Between an Emergency and a Crisis and Why it Matters* (see our Table A3.1 on p.54)? We note that the link (here) contains selected cabinet material that MSD has published, but we were after an extensive list and copies so that we can expand on our earlier work.

7. Has MSD implemented any of the recommendations from the Royal Commission of Inquiry's Phase

1 report of the *Lessons from COVID-19 to prepare Aotearoa New Zealand for a future pandemic*? Please

explain with regard to the specific recommendation number, what has been implemented and what has not – and why.

8. What other measures, instruments or actions (in addition to those in Question 7 above) have been put in place for the next pandemic?

9. Has there been any discussion on creating an off-the-shelf job retention scheme, ready for implementation when New Zealand is faced with of the next emergency or crisis (e.g. earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, extreme weather events etc). See for example, Figure 1 (below) from DPMC cabinet material.

### **Follow-up on recommendations**

Attachment 1 is an excel that contains a consolidated list of recommendations from both the Phase One

of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into COVID-19 Lessons Learned – Te Tira Ārai Urutā (Sheet 2,

Table 1 of the excel) and the Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) (Sheet 3, Table 2 of the excel). Sheet

1 contains a key, as well as provides links to the documents where the recommendations were sourced

from. We are interested in knowing to what extent particular recommendations have been implemented.

Can you please:

10. Complete the attached excel, in particular Columns E-H of Sheet 2, and Columns C-F of Sheet 3.

11. Provide the report of progress against the recommendations of Phase One of the Royal Commission (mentioned in Recommendation 39b of the Royal Commission).

12. Advise whether MOH will be producing a report on progress against the Phase One recommendations for tabling in Parliament (mentioned in Recommendation 39c of the Royal Commission).

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The Ministry has transferred the highlighted parts of your request to The Treasury as the information to which they relate is believed by the person dealing with the request to be more closely connected with the functions of that agency. In these circumstances, the Ministry is required by section 14 of the Act to transfer your request.

Please note that according to sections 14 and 15(1) of the Official Information Act, the

20-working day response period is reset by the transfer and starts again on the day [agency] receives the transfer notification. The Ministry notified The Treasury of the transfer today.

You will hear further from The Treasury concerning your request in due course.

Nā mātou noa, nā

**Official Information Team | Ministerial and Executive Services**  
**Ministry of Social Development**

**Our Purpose:**

We help New Zealanders to be safe, strong and independent

Manaaki Tangata, Manaaki Whānau